



JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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Editorial Committee Helen Post-- Stanley Manierre-- Akiko Yamaguchi

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BAPTIST UNION INCORPORATES NEW DIRECTIONS

It is normal for the voices of youth to be heard at the YMCA Center at Tozanso, but it has not been normal for them to be heard on the floor of the Japan Baptist Union Annual Convention, which met this year at Tozanso on May 14-16. This was just one of the new forces felt by the 140 delegates and observers who represented over 85% of JBU churches.

The Convention passed a Constitutional revision changing the status of schools and social work organizations from full to associate membership. This action frees the JBU to concentrate more fully on evangelism and also prepares the way for its eventual recognition as a shukyo hojin (religious corporation).

Another change empowers the Convention to elect the chairman of its Executive Committee, who heretofore has been elected by the committee.

A Third Five-Year Evangelism Plan was launched with the theme "The Independence and Interdependence of the Church." The first annual session of the Japan Baptist Overseas Medical Evangelism Association was held during the Convention, and Dr. Haruo Hasegawa announced that his visa to enter India as the first JBU missionary had not yet been received.

The Convention went on record opposing the government's Yasukuni Shrine bill and telegrams were immediately sent. A committee was established to promote active participation with other NCC-related organizations.

PROPOSED ALIEN BILL THREATENS HUMAN RIGHTS

Alertness to the dangers inherent in a new immigration law proposed by the Japanese government has prompted a strong statement by the General Assembly of the Korean Christian Church in Japan. The statement says that the new law threatens the basic human rights of aliens in Japan.

Rev. E. Seng Hwang of the Korean Church explained some of the problems in the proposed legislation. First, he said, the activities of foreigners would be so controlled that special permission would be required from the Minister of Justice if one were even to take a different kind of work than that under which he registered as an alien.

Second, the authority of the Minister of Justice and also of immigration officers would be enlarged to enable them to enforce stronger control over foreigners.

Third, the new law would mean that a person could be compelled to leave Japan even while in the process of a court trial or for the reason that he was poor and needed local or national government help. The last point especially is against international custom, Mr. Hwang said.

CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS EXPRESS CONCERNS

Seven hundred teachers in church schools, church-sponsored kindergartens and Christian schools, attending the National Assembly at Osaka Girl's School May 2 and 3, adopted statements critical of tendencies in the present government and the educational system.

The statements expressed 1) opposition to the proposed nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine, 2) concern over the introduction into Japanese school textbooks of what is now considered the mythology regarding Japan's early history, and 3) desire for changes in the present examination system, under which exam preparation jeopardizes the total educational experience.

As main speaker, the Rev. Akira Imahashi, Maita Church, Yokohama, and Tokyo Union Seminary lecturer, called for Christian education to concern itself with the reformation of the church in both its ecclesiastical and social aspects. He declared as irrelevant for today's society the concept of Christian education identified primarily with the church school movement, which was begun in England in the midst of the Industrial Revolution and designed to give new momentum to the revival movement and to respond to particular social problems raised by industrialization. Mr. Imahashi also observed that in the United States Christian education tends to be an instrument for moral education. "But," he said, "this is not the true mission of Christian education either."

The theme of the Conference was "Renewal and Advance,". As it was discussed, some participants decided that Christian educators may have been discussing the "renewal of Christian education" without reference to themselves. As a result, they tried, in the meeting to face the problems confronting the younger generation as a kind of painful confession of their own.

LOOKING AHEAD TO POST-VIETNAM

Mr. Nguyen-Tang Canh will visit Japan in mid-June, according to the Rev. Kentaro Buma, director, NCC Department of Service (Hoshi-jigyobu). Mr. Canh South Vietnam, is a WCC staff member working on The Coordinating Conference for Reconstruction in Vietnam, scheduled to be held October 7-11, in Singapore.

While in Japan, Mr. Canh will be discussing with church leaders what help Japan may be able to give to the vast reconstruction and rehabilitation program which is anticipated after a cease-fire becomes effective.

Working with Mr. Canh is Mr. Don Luce, an American who spent 8 years in Vietnam with International Voluntary Services. The Rev. Alan A. Brash is chairman of the Conference.

HOW TO TAKE PART IN NIGERIA BIAFRA-RELIEF MOVEMENT

The plight of some 3.5 million people in Biafra and of others caught in the tragedy of the Nigeria-Biafra conflict has been introduced to us by many media. Yet it has been easy to remain uninvolved and overlook what we might do to help.

In response to the request of the World Council of Churches, Japan Church World Service, NCC Division of Service (Hoshi-jigyobu), is appealing to persons in Japan in order to raise a goal of 10 million yen (\$26,000). The money will be channeled through W. C. C. which works with a Roman Catholic group, flying relief goods into Biafra and delivering goods to Nigeria.

The Hoshi-jigyobu campaign is directed at providing information about the condition of the suffering people in these African countries and a channel through which people in Japan may give concrete expression to their concern and contribute to the relief and rehabilitation of these African populations.

To help explain the need and ways of helping, the Hoshi-jigyobu has prepared a series of information sheets in Japanese: 1) materials for church groups and other individual participants giving information about the Biafra-Nigeria situation and this movement (yellow sheet - general information; blue sheet - for children; white sheet - instructions); 2) a striking poster in Japanese and English with a brief Japanese introduction to the problem; 3) handbills with picture and explanation to be given to the general public.

While Japanese churches and schools will receive materials explaining the Hoshi-jigyobu campaign, you may want to make a special effort with individuals, Bible classes, English classes, community groups, English-speaking churches, etc. to which you are related, as well as to contribute and participate yourself and with others--Japanese and foreigners.

Methods being suggested are: 1) giving by individual Christians; 2) special offerings among Christian groups; 3) soliciting contributions from the general public at railway stations, department stores, etc. to challenge people "to open their minds to the issue, their hearts to the mass-degradation of human beings, their pocketbooks to an act of participating in bringing relief to the suffering." For a public solicitation, the following steps are important:

1. Get a permit from the city of prefectural government to raise money from citizens. In Tokyo, the Hoshi-jigyobu will obtain this for you on request.
2. Obtain a permit from the traffic division of the police department. This must be done at the police office (not police box) of the area in which the appeal is to be made. Application forms for this can be obtained at stationery stores.
3. Ask for material from the Hoshi-jigyobu.

Contributions should be sent by check, postal order or postal money envelope to the Hoshi-jigyobu, which will forward it to the WCC Division of Inter-church Aid and Service, with which the Japan department is affiliated.

Address requests for materials as well as contributions to:

Nigeria-Biafra Relief
NCC Department of Service
5-1, Ginza 4-chome
Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104

Phone: 561-4774, 5257

EXCHANGE OF HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

In the continuing International Christian Youth Exchange program, Japan will receive five students from abroad and send eleven high school students overseas this year.

More than 100 Japanese students have gone abroad to live with families, to study and to experience a foreign culture. More than 25 youth have come to Japan under this program. The five students coming to Japan this summer are from West Germany, France, Indonesia and the United States.

NEW PLANS FOR AN OLD TECHNIQUE

Kamishibai, the traditional Japanese story-telling technique, will carry New and Old Testament stories under a new publishing plan announced by AVACO, the Christian Audio Visual Center. The AVACO program calls for publication of 24 sets of kamishibai over a two-year period. One series of twelve will feature Old Testament characters: Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Jonah, Gideon, and Daniel, as well as The Creation. The New Testament subjects center in the life of Jesus, The Parables and Paul.

Kamishibai consists of a series of large cards carrying colored illustrations of the main incidents of a story, shown successively as the teacher or child tells the story from the script printed on the back. The popularity of kamishibai is attributed to its being easy to use as a non-projected audio visual aid, and to the direct communication it establishes between teacher and student through the teacher's expression of her own personality in the telling of the story.

Because kamishibai are expensive to produce, AVACO has heretofore produced only a limited number. The new publishing plan comes after several years of study of materials, use and application in teaching.

The May issue of AVACO News reports that 90,000 sets of "curriculum cards" were sold in 1968. The curriculum card is a small illustrated card with Bible verse, which is widely used as an attendance card by Christian kindergartens and church schools. The "See, Mother, what I got" enthusiasm has been found often to carry the Bible story home and produce a ripple effect, before being mounted in the young collector's card album.

"CHRISTOLOGY" ISSUE OF THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

Volume II of the Northeast Asia Journal of Theology (March, 1969) has just been published. "Christology" is the focus of articles by theologians from Korea, Taiwan, and Japan.

The Journal, published twice a year by the Northeast Association of Theological Schools, can be ordered from the Association, c/o Rev. Masatoshi Korogi, NCC, Japan. Annual subscriptions cost ¥600 in Japan: \$3.00 (U.S.) outside of Japan.

The articles in this issue:

The Problem of the Historical Jesus; Tamotsu Hirano/ The Gospel of Thomas and the Historical Jesus; Yong Ok Kim/ Hermeneutical Discussion in Germany after Bultmann: Justus Freytag/ The Yagi-Takizawa Debate: Kenzo Tagawa/ The Christological Reality of the Event of Faith: Choan-Seng Song/ Christ and History: Yoshio Noro/ Renewal in the Old Testament: Shinya Nomoto/ Writings on Christology in Korea: Jong Sung Rhee/ A Selected Bibliography of Christology in Japan: Yukimaro Amagai and Yoshinobu Kumazawa/ Wesley Studies in Japan: John W. Krummel/ NEATS Theological Consultation on the Historical Jesus and the Contemporary Christ: James M. Phillips. Art work is by Kaeriyama and Sadao Watanabe, Japanese Christian artists.

ASHIYA SANJO CHURCH, ASHIYA, Japan

Words that made me stop and think---

Upon graduation from Kanto Gakuin Theological Seminary in Yokohama in 1954, Keiji Tamada was assigned to a preaching place at Tagajo. But when, with the formation of a denominational union of churches, the preaching point was withdrawn from its affiliation with the United Church, he chose to leave.

It was seven years ago that he began pioneer work at Ashiya. The preaching point has now become a church of 50 members and many more seekers. Its meeting place is a rented house, which was in fact Mr. Tamada's boyhood home, in the Sanjo area of Ashiya.

I visited the church recently, having known Mr. Tamada for years. I was surprised to find an exceptionally energetic group of people there and learned the average age of the members is 27 years. They have just redone two of the old tatami rooms in the downstairs portion of the house and have added an extension where the garden used to be. The result is a meeting place that is very worshipful and, at the same time, functional. Although the United Church of Christ in Japan, to which the preaching place belongs, assisted, more than three-fourths of the total cost of 4 million yen (\$11,111) is being raised by the church itself.

Mr. Tamada is blind, having lost his sight when he was fifteen years old. A great sports enthusiast at that time, he experienced great discouragement over his blindness, but he found inspiration in the life of Helen Keller and in studies and friendships in a Bible Class at Kobe Sei Ai Church.

As Mr. Tamada and I talked, he said to me, "In one sense, my blindness is an asset. There are many things which I cannot do, so this means the believers do them...which is as it should be."

---Stanley Manierre

AS THE JcAN GOES TO PRESS, 106 PASTORS AND A NUMBER OF LAYMEN ARE ON A HUNGER STRIKE to protest the still-pending Yasukuni Shrine bill, expected momentarily to be introduced into the extended Diet session. At a sit-down demonstration at Sukiwabashi Park in Tokyo, representatives of the hunger-strike pastors explained their stand and sought signatures from passers-by to protest the bill.

HEADLINE-MAKING EVENTS

A GOVERNMENT BILL TO SETTLE CAMPUS DISPUTES is about to be presented to the Diet by the Ministry of Education and the Liberal Democratic Party. The bill would 1) give university presidents stronger authority in settling disputes; 2) give the Minister of Education authority to terminate school activities if the dispute does not end within a certain period; 3) give the government the right to abolish a national university if its dispute continues more than three months. Strong opposition comes from students and university officials.

FORTY-THREE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ARE CLOSED either because of having been barricaded by students or shut down by the administrations themselves. Freshmen at 22 universities wait at home for classes to begin. One out of four national university freshmen has not attended classes since the new school year supposedly began in April, per the Asahi Shimbun, May 15.

TEXTILE RESTRICTIONS were a major issue when U.S. Secretary of Commerce Stans and Prime Minister Sato met May 13. Sato said Japan is ready to begin joint study but cannot accept the U.S. proposal for self-restraint on woolen and synthetic textile exports to the U.S.A.

IN A SURPRISE MOVE THE ANTICIPATED MERGER OF YAWATA AND FUJI STEEL COMPANIES was not approved by the Fair Trade Commission, although the steel manufacturers are appealing the decision. Other steel companies, which looked to the merger to reduce the immediate expansion activities of the two leaders, are now uncertain as to what is ahead.

STUDENTS AND BEHEIREN MEMBERS SURROUNDED THE POLICE STATION IN KYOTO to protest the Japanese police's actions in turning a U.S. deserter over to U.S. Military authorities. Injured in the Vietnam War, the soldier had escaped from a hospital in Japan in October and been sheltered for eight months by a voluntary committee organized to aid war deserters.

THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRIES TRADE LIBERALIZATION that supposedly was to await reorganization of the Japanese automobile industry has been sped up by the recently announced Mitsubishi-Chrysler tie-up that plans to put a new car on the Japanese market. MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) is not happy about the gun-jumping.